



# NENA NEWS

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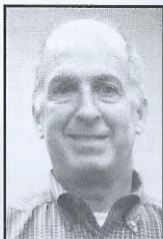
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# President's Comments

by William Harkins



It is my sincere hope that this newsletter finds you and your loved ones well. Since my last message in the March issue of the newsletter our world has been turned on end with the sudden appearance of the deadly COVID-19 virus. As a result of the pandemic our lives have been disrupted as the stay at home order has kept us from our daily activities that once seemed routine. These activities include numismatics and the cancellation of club meetings, lectures and shows. Restrictions are now being slowly lifted as business start to re-open. I am hopeful that our club activities and shows will also come back though there may be some restrictions. Below please find a great offer by the ANA in response to the cancelation of the summer seminar and updates regarding the World's Fair of Money and our plans for the fall convention.

**New ANA eLearning Academy Provides Taste of Summer Seminar;** Collectors Can Register for Free Condensed Courses During what would have been the American Numismatic Association's (ANA) annual Summer Seminar event – June 29-July 10, the Association will instead offer free virtual courses through its new ANA eLearning Academy. Eleven courses that would have been offered during the week-long Summer Seminar will be offered in a condensed one- to two-hour online format. Courses are open to both ANA members and non-members; there is no charge to participate but preregistration is required. For detailed class descriptions and to register, visit [info.money.org/elearning](http://info.money.org/elearning); or contact Seminars Manager Brianna Victor at (719) 482-9865 or at [seminars@money.org](mailto:seminars@money.org) for more information.

**Update ANA World's Fair of Money:** While the country begins to re-open for business and stay-at-home restrictions are lifted, the American Numismatic Association continues to plan for the World's Fair of Money®. The premier convention features all things related to coin collecting. This year, the ANA is returning to Pittsburgh, Penn., Aug. 4-8. Amid the pandemic, the ANA has been communicating with the convention team at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. The situa-

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tion is fluid and the status of the show depends on COVID-19 restrictions set up by the State of Pennsylvania. At present, the City of Pittsburgh is following the guidance of Governor Tom Wolf, and final decisions have not yet been made regarding summer convention center activities.

The New England Numismatic Association is continuing with plans for our 76th, Conference and Convention. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd, in conjunction with the New Hampshire Coin and Currency Expo, October 2-3, 2020 at the Double Tree by Hilton, 700 Elm Street, Manchester, N.H. We have been in contact with the show promoter EBW Promotions who is working with the convention center. The status of the show depends on COVID-19 restrictions set up by the State of New Hampshire.

If you haven't visited our website lately please do the site has been updated with information pertaining to our activities, Club listings and announcements. For more information visit us at [www.nenacoin.org](http://www.nenacoin.org).

If you have any ideas or suggestions on how we may better serve you, please let us know. You may email me at [williamharkins@comcast.net](mailto:williamharkins@comcast.net) or by mail NENA, P.O. Box 2061, Woburn, MA 01888.

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*William Harkins*

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# Collecting America's Forgotten Silver Dollar - the Trade Dollar

By: Mark Benvenuto



**M**organ and Peace dollars have been collector favorites for a very long time, with many of the highest end pieces crossing the auction block at rather hefty prices. Some of the very early dollars of a young United States also vie for some time in the limelight. Amidst such hype one silver dollar type that is very often overlooked is the trade dollar. Issued only from 1873 to 1878 for circulation, then for six more years as proofs only, the trade dollars seem to be in the shadows almost eternally. Let's shine some light on these big dollars and see what sort of collection might be feasible.

To begin with, some of the Trade dollars are remarkably common coins, at least according to their official mintage tallies. The 1877-S originally saw 9.5 million coined, while the 1876-S came out to the tune of 5.2 million, and the 1875-S saw a total of 4.4 million. That makes these three the most common in the series, but there are others that rang in up in the millions as well. Yet today, according to the standard price lists, the 1873, and 1873-S are the cheapest – and the 1873 out of Philadelphia has a mintage that is modest at best. To turn a phrase: what gives?

For those of us who have never given this series more than a casual glance, something worth knowing about the Trade dollars is that the official Mint totals have become worthless. It's no fault of the fine folks working at the Mint back then. No, it's that the Trade dollars were essentially recalled, and those that were turned in, often to be melted,



were not counted in terms of what their mint mark was. So, for the most part, we can make educated guesses about how many of any particular Trade dollar remains, or we can use the numbers that have been tabulated by the third party grading services. They have had a few decades of slabbing all sorts of coins, including Trade dollars, and it's a fair bet that the numbers they have do parallel in some way how many of each date and mint mark survive.

With this new angle about the numbers in mind, we need to get to the numbers all collectors care about: the price! We commented that of the entire series, the 1873 and the 1873-S are currently the least expensive. To put a dollar value on this, let's examine two grades, MS-60 and VF-20. In MS-60, each of these coins runs about \$1,200. In VF-20, each of these runs about \$150. Interestingly, it is only in the VF-20 grade that these two coins become the most affordable in the series – meaning there are a few dates that do cost about \$1,000 even, at that MS-60 grade. But the price difference is why we're going to talk about the circulated grade in the first place. In general, most of us do not like to shell out one thousand of our own dollars for a single dollar, no matter how silver, how old, or how much of a Trade dollar it is. Spending \$150 is a transaction many of us can feel much more comfortable with, or at least more comfortable than we do at \$1K.

With these two numbers in mind, scanning the price lists of the major numismatic periodicals gets us to the realization that there are nine dates and mint marks within this short series that we can land for anywhere from \$150 to \$225 in that just-mentioned VF-20 grade. Admittedly, these are not mint state beauties. But they all retain enough fine detail within the designs that they can be beautiful coins.

Beyond this, rather disappointingly, the remaining Trade dollars are always going to be in the high hundreds of dollars or the low thousands, even if we stay away from the mint state grades. But before we settle on a somewhat abbreviated collection, a short set, as it were, let's take a look at one more possibility.

### **A proof Trade dollar.**

The Trade dollar series was pretty much a dead animal by 1878. Yet from 1879 all the way to 1885 proofs were made. Folks who have kept an eye on the series know that the 1884 saw a “whopping” 10 coins, and the 1885 saw any even tiny 5 pieces. On the rare occasion one of these crosses an auction block, it is big news. But 1879 saw 1,541 proofs, in 1880 that number was 1,987, and in 1882 the proof output was 1,097 coins. Even the 1881 and the 1883 saw almost a thousand proofs

produced. And this means that it might be possible, just maybe, to land a single proof Trade dollar for a collection.

According to one of the big monthly price lists, the proof Trade dollars are given prices even in grades lower than PF-60. At the time of this writing, they are listed as \$1,500 for a PF-60 coin – which might be an interesting proof to examine if we could find one. But we mention this simply to point out that if we could save up enough to buy one, this would certainly be the crown jewel of just about any collection.

So, just where do we go to see about buying a proof Trade dollar? Well, we started with the world's largest, never-ending swap meet / garage sale – eBay. Believe it or not, there were some proof Trade dollars posted there. It turns out that the lowest price for one that had been slabbed was \$2,300 for a PF-62 from 1879. While that's not as cheap as what the price listing indicates, it's still worth a bit of consideration. Yes, most of us would probably have to save up for a purchase like this. But we're talking this price for a coin with an official total of 1,541 coins minted. That's about the same price as a 1916-D Mercury dime in F-12 condition. Those two prices and those two coins certainly give us some insight into collectors' desires, and the overall demand for a coin.

Even for those of us who think that \$150 to \$225 for a single Trade dollar is a bit pricey, we've seen that the Trade dollars are not an impossible series in which to indulge ourselves. They can be attractive coins from a bygone age. And they also have the strange yet wonderful possibility of a very rare proof or two that a person could utilize as a shining star at the center of any collection. ✍

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### **Obituary**

We are saddened to report the passing of two Nena members and advertisers. George Champlin Jr, owner of Westerly Enterprises in Westerly, RI and Wade Boughton, owner of South County Antique Center in North Kingstown, RI. In unrelated incidents both men passed away while trying to find medical assistance for an acute medical problem earlier this spring. Obituaries were not informative as to the reasons of their death. Both were well known in their fields and both leave wives and families.

We at Nena are heartbroken at the news of these two gentlemen's passing. The numismatic world has lost two of its brightest and honorable stars!



# Collecting Ancient Coins

By: Benjamin D. R. Hellings<sup>1</sup>

**L**ike many areas of numismatics, one does not necessarily need a deep wallet to collect ancient coins. There are thousands upon thousands of types to collect, across various cultures, centuries, and geographic areas, stretching from modern-day England to Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It is an incredibly large area of numismatics that as a field of study and collecting has been around since the Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup> century). The Roman emperor Augustus was even said to have had his own coin collection, which would stretch the timeline of the field for two millennia. This brief article hopes to offer you an introduction to ancient coinage and how to collect (and hopefully study).

I should start by way of a background. I am currently the Jackson-Tomasko Associate Curator of Numismatics at the Yale University Art Gallery, a position I have held since March 2018. Previously, between September 2016 and March 2018, I was the Ben Lee Damsky Assistant Curator of Numismatics. Before joining Yale, I undertook my D.Phil. (Ph.D.) at the University of Oxford in Ancient History under the supervision of Prof. Chris Howgego (Keeper of the Heberden Coin Room, at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), that I successfully defended in November 2016. My dissertation was on the monetary integration of northwest Europe during the Roman era and focused on Roman coin finds. While a D.Phil. student, I worked at the Ashmolean Museum on Islamic and Roman coins. In my younger years, I collected world coins and then dabbled a bit with Roman coins but did not pursue this further as money was tight while I was at university. Now, as much as I would relish resuming the hobby we all share, I am prohibited since it would constitute a conflict of interest (being a curator of numismatics). I am, however, permitted to collect on behalf of Yale and expand their collection that will remain intact in perpetuity. In this short essay, I hope to give you a background of my experience with ancient numismatics and how to approach collecting these ancient wonders.

## Library

Since this is a field as wide and varied as one can imagine, it is not always easy knowing where to start. Thankfully, the internet gives us much at

*Continued on next page*

### *Collecting Ancient Coins Continued*

our fingertips. Ancient numismatics is divided into broad categories, which then have sub-categories. The main fields are Greek, Roman, and Byzantine. You can think of these categories as Pre-Roman, Roman, and Post-Roman. So, anything ranging from Archaic Greece, to Celtic French, to Bactria, to Seleucid or Ptolemaic, is considered as Greek. The Greek field is therefore incredibly diverse in time and space. Roman coinage is typically divided chronologically as Roman Republican and Roman Imperial coinage with a third category known as Roman Provincial Coinage (formerly known as Greek Imperial and thus often found together with Greek coins in older publications). Byzantine is Eastern Roman Empire material from AD 498.

For the beginner, David Sear has published a series of books on Greek (2 volumes), Roman (5 volumes), Greek Imperials, and Byzantine coins. These books have a little bit of introduction and a generalized list with prices that are only sometimes accurate.<sup>1</sup> These books also provide you with basic identifying tips such as a list of abbreviations, common reverse types, etc. They, however, are only a start to building your knowledge base. CNG (Classical Numismatic Group) is in process of publishing a more detailed series of handbooks that are similar in nature but focused on Greek coins in more detail. If you decide to pursue collecting Greek coins, I would recommend picking up the relevant volumes.<sup>2</sup> These books are more like the mega Red Book for American coins and your go-to one stop for the Greek coins of a particular region. Other useful books include:

*Greek Coin Types and their Identification* - Plant.

*Identifying Roman Coins* - Reece and James

*The Beginner's Guide to Identifying Byzantine Coins* - Fitts

As you become more dedicated and familiar with ancient coins, you will need to build your library with the standard academic reference books, since the books listed above are not cited by any serious dealer, collector, auction house, or academic. For Greek coins, unfortunately, there is no one definitive reference book you can turn to since they have been published on a collection basis (usually by each individual intuition). The series of these books is known as the *Sylloge Nummorum Graecorum* (SNG for short) and there are well over-120 different volumes in the series! In addition to SNG, the 27 volume *Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum* (published between 1873 and 1927) are still readily cited although contain many errors. A very basic cursory book with the main types and history of Greek coins from each city is provided in *Historia Nummorum* by Barclay

*Continued on page 30*

# "Bank House Tavern" Mount Vernon Bank

By: C. John Fereri



Now on the National Register of Historic Places, this house, previously known as the Mount Vernon Tavern or as the local folks preferred: the Bank House Tavern", was so described because a bank operated out of a second floor room above the taproom.

Photo courtes of Wikipedia

In Mount Vernon Village, a section of Foster Rhode Island stands an old structure, more recently spruced up. This structure was built in approximately 1760 with some additional work added on for years to come. The main part of the house held the Mount Vernon Tavern and was a wayside stop on the "Plainfield Pike" (Rt #14) for travelers and stagecoaches through the 1800's. This route was fairly direct passage from Providence, R.I. to Plainfield, Connecticut and from there to other destinations in Connecticut. The locals referred to the Tavern as: "The Bank House Tavern" for the reason disclosed in the caption above. Down this same road in 1782, Rochambeau marched with 5000 French troops heading to Yorktown to beef up the Continental forces that were to tangle with the British in the final and decisive battle of the Revolutionary War.

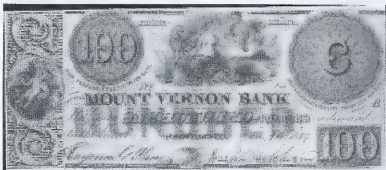


*This nicely designed and engraved banknote is typical of the artistry exhibited on state bank notes of its period. The note is hand signed by Samuel Tillinghast, President and R. G. Place, Cashier.*

*Continued on next page*  
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### *Bank House Tavern Continued*

In 1823 a Charter was granted to form a bank. The bank was housed in a room on the second floor of this Tavern and later on, in a separate stone building on the west side of the property. During its state chartered life it carried on typical banking duties and issued state sanctioned paper money from both this room and later, a separate building (which was the scene of a break-in in 1852) on the grounds. The state chartered issues today, know as obsolete or broken bank notes filled a void when the federal government took a holiday, so to speak, from the issuance of paper money. From about 1790 until 1864 the country had to fill that void by having state governments charter and oversee private banks which in turn had their own paper money printed. These local banks were usually run by local people and the paper issues they had printed took on a local flavor. The vignettes (engravings) on them often showed a local scene or person well known in town or maybe an industry that was prominent in that town and often, though not in this case, the bank itself. The bank upstairs was named, Mount Vernon Bank (after this section of Foster, RI) and the local people referred to the tavern as the "Bank House Tavern". Its popularity as a bank must have outshined its popularity as a tavern! The notes issued from this bank, were dated at Foster, RI as indicated on the pictured note, above. In 1855 the bank moved to Providence and continued in business now issuing paper money dated at Providence, RI. until 1859 when the bank failed. Remaining notes dated at Foster are extremely rare. Other notes of the bank issued from Providence are very attractive but quite common. Collectors of Rhode Island currency will be receiving some additional education when they read about this historic combination of Tavern and Bank.



*This issue, beautifully engraved by the New England Banknote Company is one of the notes of its last issue before closing in 1859. It was common with state banks to keep issuing larger and larger banknote denominations as time went on. This helped keep their outstanding circulation high which seemed to the Board of Directors, to be the smart thing to do. £*

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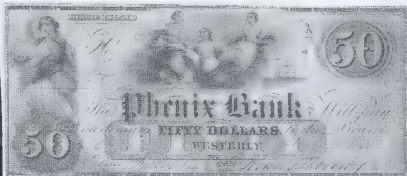
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# Vermont Sesquicentennial

## Half Dollar

By: Peter D. Jones, MA MD MBA



*The coin celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vermont's independence, and the Battle of Bennington in 1777, which was a turning point in the Revolutionary war leading to British General "Johnny" Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga, New York and leading to the entry of France on America's side.*

*The obverse shows Ira Allen's bust facing right. The legend above reads: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. The legend below reads: IRA ALLEN, FOUNDER OF VERMONT.*

*The reverse shows a "catamount" i.e. a mountain lion. This fills the coin's fields. The initials CK for Charles Keck, the sculptor, is between the hind legs of the mountain lion. The legend reads: BATTLE OF BENNINGTON. IN GOD WE TRUST above, and E PLURIBUS UNUM and HALF DOLLAR below. The inscriptions read 1777-1927 above the mountain lion, and AUG 16 to the left of the mountain lion.*

*This coin is the highest relief of all the classic commemoratives. It looks good!*

**Introducing the coin – what does a catamount have to do with Vermont!**

**Read on – and all shall be revealed!**

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### *Vermont Sesquicentennial Half Dollar Continued*

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, 1925 US Congress authorized 40,000 Vermont Sesquicentennial commemorative half dollars in the same bill as the California Diamond Jubilee and the Fort Vancouver commemorative half dollars. The Vermont Sesquicentennial Commission President, John Spargo, asked New York sculptor, Mr. Sherry Fry, to do Ira Allen's portrait on the obverse, and the Bennington Monument obelisk on the reverse. The models look more like a medal than a coin as it has lots of blank space. Fry had also done the Ira Allen statue at the University of Vermont which was widely acclaimed. Charles Moore, Chairman of the US Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) replied that the monument was from the 1812 war (which was wrong) and he seemed to feel the Allen bust was inferior. Moore also questioned the lettering.

The Vermont Sesquicentennial Commission President, John Spargo, corresponded with the CFA insisting that the Vermont Commission's choice of designs were good, and that US President Coolidge (a Vermonter) had personally attended the monument's dedication, and would want it on the coin. But the CFA still nixed the design. Another sculptor, Charles Keck (he sculpted the Lynchburg sesquicentennial commemorative half dollars and the 1915 Panama-Pacific gold commemorative coins) was then asked to do the models instead. He submitted a model with the Catamount Tavern on the reverse. The CFA did not like that either and suggested a catamount instead for "artistic reasons".

The catamount was the name of a pub frequented by the Green Mountain Boys (discussed below). It had a stuffed catamount on a pole outside, like an English pub sign. Keck made three reverses, one a trophy (flags, drum, swords, muskets), one a catamount on a rock with names of Battle participants, and one a walking catamount.

CFA approved only the walking catamount on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1926, but still tried to get the "Founder of Vermont" removed (unsuccessfully). The final models were sent to Medallie Arts Company to prepare the dies for the Philadelphia Mint.

I would bet that well over 99% of Americans, if questioned why the reverse has a catamount, or even what a catamount was, would have absolutely no idea! The reason was the catamount was a rebus.

The concept of a rebus was far more familiar to people two hundred years ago than it is now. The word derives from the Latin phrase: "Non verbis, sed rebus", which being translated means "not by words, but by things" i.e. a pictorial symbol representing the word rather than a printed word, standing for the pub.

In January and February 1927 the Philadelphia Mint struck

40,034 half dollars (34 for assay). The Bennington Battle Monument and Historical Association distributed them by mail and through banks for \$1 each. Ultimately 11,892 were returned for melting.

The profits went to the Bennington Museum who distributed the money to various education institutions.

*The catamount (a shortened version of cat o' mountain) is the same as a mountain lion today. Others call it a cougar or puma. In Connecticut I have only heard it called a mountain lion. The Linnaean name is Puma concolor with 32 subspecies. It is the most widespread mammal in the Americas from the Canadian Yukon to the south Andes. The subspecies in North America is Puma concolor cougar. It is a solitary nocturnal carnivorous hunter. Standing two to three feet tall, it is the size of a lion. Males weigh 120 – 220 lbs. and females 60 – 140 lbs. It looks like a lion with a small head and long tail (see picture opposite).*



*Some have labelled the cat on the reverse a Vermont catamount, which it is clearly not. The Vermont catamount is a different species altogether called the Canadian lynx or Felis lynx canadensis. They have points on their ears, short tails, slant down to the front, and are cat size i.e. 18-24 lbs.*

### **The tale of Vermont independence and the Battle of Bennington.**

In 1609, Samuel de Champlain, from New France, discovered Lake Champlain. In 1724, the British erected the first permanent fort – Fort Drummer near Battleboro (see map on right). Benning Wentworth (after whom Bennington was named) was the New Hampshire British Governor at the time and in 1741 extended his state's border to 20 miles east of the Hudson River. New York Governor DeWitt Clinton said Wentworth had no authority to do this. Vermont and Massachusetts also objected saying Vermont was part of Massachusetts. Wentworth suggested the British crown settle the matter.



**Bennington  
Monument**

But the French and Indian war intervened in 1754. In 1759, the British captured Ticonderoga and Crown Point. The crown then decided in New York's favor i.e. the lands belonged to New York and not New Hampshire/Vermont.

Brothers Ethan Allen (1739-1789) and Ira Allen (1751-1814) were settlers on New Hampshire land in Vermont and speculated in land. They formed the Green Mountain boys to protect their lands. Vermont is French

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# Are Numismatists Better Able to Cope with the "Corona Virus"?

By: C. John Ferreri

**N**umismatists might have the inside edge in staying healthy during outbreaks of bacterial and/or viral diseases. Numismatists, those collectors who prefer handling coins (many of which are silver) rather than other collectable items, probably help themselves by handling large amounts of silver coin. Silver coins have been used over the centuries in various capacities for their antibacterial and antiviral effects. Sea captains often tossed a silver coin or two into the kegs of drinking water on board their ships to keep it palatable during their journeys. Drops of a colloidal silver "solution" protected the sight of newborns from the effects of venereal disease passed on by the mother. And, numismatists are known to keep a silver dollar or two, constantly in their pockets as a "lucky" charm. Find one of these folks and ask if they have had any "colds" lately. I'll bet the answer will be, "no", not in a few years! How do they manage to stay healthy while others of us are lucky to get through the year with only two or three episodes of the "flu", stomach virus, or respiratory colds? Does the answer lie in the fact that many numismatists handle silver coin much more than the average "Joe"? There is plenty to read on the internet about silver ion and nanoparticles and their effects on bacteria and viruses. Even if we are not versed in the scientific application of such things it could do us well to read what is available and see how this technology may eventually become a "cure" for many of the future diseases we could be facing.



*Morgan and Peace Dollars, both in the perfect condition to pull, "Pocket Duty". There is no need for high grade silver coins for this application.*

A silver dollar in your pants pocket is constantly leaching silver ion into your clothing. If you are handling the coin many times a day the silver ion (much too small to see) is transferring to the skin on your hands and eventually to your whole body. Of course, silver coins that have been slabbed are not going to be as effective in keeping you healthy even if they have a "CAC" sticker! So, a dinged up and worn, raw Silver Dollar or "Piece of Eight" might be just what the doctor prescribes! Keep one in your pocket and enjoy good health for years to come!



*War year "Nicks", each only 40% effective for medical duty and a "Pillar Dollar with an ample amount of Chinese "Chop Marks" is especially suited to combat the "Spanish Flu".*

Is a common Morgan or Peace Dollar going to be effective on the Corona virus? We don't know for sure but it seems to work for the common cold virus and other viral and bacterial diseases. Nothing specific is written about this anti-viral and anti-bacterial effect regarding numismatists and what we handle. You will have to try it for a while and see how you respond. If you can't afford a silver dollar, try keeping a couple of War Year Jefferson Nickels in your pockets. At 40% silver, they also could be beneficial but are easier to lose. If you fear an attack of the Spanish Flu perhaps a nice Pillar Dollar would fit the bill. After all, these coins could well have ridden the high seas on Spanish Galleons while sailing from parts of the New World to Spain in the bottom of a barrel of water, all the while keeping everyone on board safe and sound! While the world searches for an effective vaccine to combat this latest Corona Virus you might be able to protect yourself and others who come into contact with you by simply keeping a silver dollar or two in your pocket while acting like the all-knowing numismatist we would like to think we are! 🍴

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# Yes, They Counterfeited Coins Even Back Then

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By Jonathan Lerner

**S**ome people may think I'm crazy but, as a former public historian, I actually enjoy reading the early newspapers from the 1800's and many times find interesting stories about numismatics. The famous philosopher George Santayana wrote, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it"

Therefore, it was quite a jewel that I encountered an article from December 1860 from a small Pennsylvania newspaper and wanted to share with you the history of this story.

The story begins with "The occasional arrest of a scamp on the charge of uttering spurious coin of the realm, reminds us that is have been estimated by good calculations that fully ten per cent of all the apparent gold coin in circulation is bogus, much of it being so admirably executed as to deceive bank officers and other first class judges."

Let's reflect for just a moment on this bombshell that the author of this story has actually just told to the reader... that shortly before the Civil War was about to begin 10% of all circulating gold coins were fakes! That's an amazing statement and I'm sure one that boggles your mind, just as it did mine.

The article gets even more interesting as we read on the reader is told that the estimated loss on the coins in circulation in the United States is over \$1,000,000 per annum. If we equate that to today's value, the relative price worth of \$1,000,000.00 from 1860 is over \$31,200,000.00 using the Consumer Price Index and current conversion tables.

The US mint in Philadelphia actually spent \$5,000 to fund Dr. James Barclay to conduct research on counterfeiting and Dr. Barclay traveled to Europe for further research and experiments. His work was so well received that the result of his experiments and his report were fully endorsed by Professors Rodgers and Vatheck, two eminent scientists of Philadelphia, who had been appointed by the President to co-operate with him. When the matter of remunerating him for his discovery was brought before Congress, a bill passed the House giving him \$100,000. It failed to pass the Senate by one vote, cast by Senator Mason, but that story I will save for another day.

*Continued on next page*




Dr. James Turner Barclay

The good Dr. Barclay actually found 14 different methods in his report by which either coins were imitated or tampered with. Some of the methods such as casting you may already be familiar with. Casting a medal of inferior value, but resembling the coin imitated as much as possible in color, specific gravity, ring, etc. is the simplest kind of counterfeiting practiced, but is usually limited exclusively to the imitation of silver coins.

Another method Dr. Barclay reported was called the peripheral fraud. This fraud consists in removing from the circumference of coin more or less of the metal by means of the turning lathe and chisel or the file. Several dimes worth of precious metal may be thus removed from the larger gold coins, and yet the reading be so perfectly restored by the simplest mechanical devices, that the loss cannot be discovered, except by means of measurement or weighing.

Then we had the Sweating Fraud, no this is not Oprah Winfrey and a weight watchers' diet but rather where reducing the value of coin consists in abstracting a portion of precious metals by means of mercury. If the process be carefully conducted and not carried too far, the coin may be robbed to a very serious extent, and yet the impression on its faces not be observably impaired as to awaken suspicion.

I'll wrap this up with a humorous observation from Robert Matthews, a counterfeit-coin expert and former Queen's Assay Master at the Royal Mint, who wrote about why we currently don't see US dollar coins being counterfeited. "What may have spared the United States from such embarrassment, Matthews politely ventured is our level of usage: That is, \$1 coins are so unpopular that even counterfeiters can't be bothered." 

*Jonathan Lerner is the Owner of Scarsdale Coin and may be contacted via:  
[www.coinhelp.com](http://www.coinhelp.com)*

## MEMBER CLUBS—NEWS AND VIEWS

*Representatives of any of the Nena clubs are urged to send in accounts of their meetings so all Nena members can keep abreast of the goings on of the various regional clubs. Please send your short report in "Word" format to: John Ferreri johnnybanknote@yahoo.com.*

**The Collectors Club of Boston (CCB)** was to celebrate its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on May 19<sup>th</sup> with a dinner at the Chateau Restaurant in Waltham. The speaker for the evening would have been Nena membership director, Robert Fritsch. The pandemic infection, Covid-19 forced the closing of many restaurants and other venues where people meet in large groups. The club was founded in 1945 by a group of members from the Boston Numismatic Society who also wanted to support a club that incorporated commercial activity to augment the scholarly information that was disseminated at the Boston Numismatic Society meetings.

**The Mansfield Numismatic Society** ..... This club's 47<sup>th</sup> annual show which was to be held on March 29<sup>th</sup> was canceled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This might have been the last show in the present building at 322 Prospect St. in Willimantic, Connecticut. This building and property is being sold and a new venue is presently being built. It will be a community center, also with a basketball gymnasium. The center will house a senior facility, rooms for various sporting clubs, (wrestling, swimming, basketball, etc). A pool will also be on the premises for community swimming. The new venue will probably not be ready in time for the Mansfield Numismatic Society's 2021 Annual Show in March so planning at this point, is a little bit up in the air as to which building the show will actually be in. Please stay tuned!

**The three "Boston" clubs** (Boston Numismatic Society "BNS", Collectors Club of Boston "CCB" and the Currency Club of New England "CCNE") also had to cancel the annual "Thomas P. Rockwell" combined meeting on the night of April 14<sup>th</sup> at their regular meeting place in Waltham. This will be rescheduled when able.

**The Southbridge Coin and Stamp Club** The SCSC usually meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays in Sturbridge (see Club Meeting section) or contact Mark at [gluemark@gmail.com](mailto:gluemark@gmail.com).



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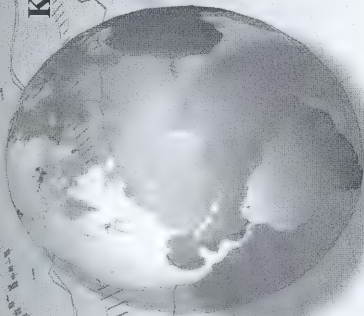
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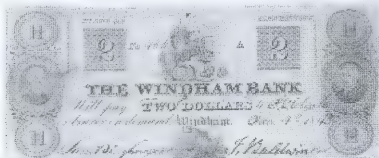
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# Honey! There's a Frog on my Note

By: C. John Ferreri



Three important subjects appear on the bank note shown above. They are important to the history of the town of Windham, Connecticut. The two male portraits are of Colonel Jedediah Elderkin (right) and Colonel Eliphalet Dyer (left) (names and rank appear above the portraits). Neither of these men were present when the "Frog" as seen in the lower center portrait had its day in history in the summer of 1754. The note, engraved by N. & S.S. Jocelyn in conjunction with Draper, Underwood, Bald and Spencer commemorates a batrachian event that occurred and has brought tears of laughter to those who have read historical accounts of that event.

I'm sure my Honey couldn't be less interested in my note(s) with engravings of frogs but for the record, I would still like to tell this story: the sleepy town in eastern Connecticut named Windham, wasn't much larger than a dirt crossroad in 1754, with plenty of farmland in every direction. That was before the manufacturing center of town (Willimantic) on the river, took hold and thread and silk mills were built that would soon become known world-wide. Two important lawyers in American history did happen to live in Windham (now named Windham Center) at that time and both were colonels in the Connecticut Militia. There was an ongoing



war with the French and Indians at the time and both men were absent from town, serving with their units on the frontier. Both Colonels Elderkin and Dyer were later instrumental in schooling Samuel Huntington, a young man and future president of the Continental Congress who lived but 2-3 miles distant. A legend was born in Windham/Willimantic that summer that has to this day, identified with the town. The legend has thrived and even given an identity to the town that is recorded in books of local lore.

One night during an especially dry and warm summer night a distant noise woke many of the townspeople. As the noise became louder and closer many became alarmed, armed themselves and took safe position and waited for what they were sure was to be either Indians or the French Army with all their wagons and canon making way up the road to the village of Windham to exact revenge on the community that sent their bravest two, the colonels, to fight them at a different place. The bravest of the remaining townspeople went to the crest of the hill (now Connecticut Rt.14) to receive the certain volleys that they were sure to be fired momentarily. The raucous sound was almost deafening, the enemy must surely be close yet through the dark, none could be seen. Folks were sure they heard the voices beyond calling the names of Elderkin and Dyer. Surely they wanted these patriots taken prisoner or even worse!

*Continued on next page*

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NENA News 5

**NennaNews 27**



*This Windham Bank note, a more recent issue than that shown first, reveals a pastoral scene indicative of the surrounding farmlands as its main vignette but also a vignette of two folklore producing frogs in the right corner of the note. This vignette engraved by the firm, Toppin Carpenter, Casilear & Co. of Philadelphia and New York shows our subjects, one in triumph and the other in repose perhaps as seen by the few town folks who came upon the deadly scene.*

As time passed and dawn arrived a few of the bravest town residents ventured out to where the last sounds in the darkness were heard, an area at the base of a pond and where a brook was channeled through the road about a ½ mile from the crest of the hill. There they found the remains of thousands of bullfrogs, belly-up where they died in battle against their like the night before, for the little water remaining in the all but dried-up pond. With great relief the adventurers returned to the village to tell the tale of what alarmed them the night before then probably sat down for breakfast and had themselves a good laugh.

The news of this event spread through the countryside and the people of Windham became the butt of jokes, humorous stories and poems about the "Battle of the Frogs". The local bank (Windham Bank) even chose to issue notes commemorating the frog fight which can be seen on three different issues the bank circulated. To this day, residents of the Windhams are reminded of that fearful night when traveling through town and approaching the city's newest bridge they may observe the likeness of four huge copper frogs perched on cement pedestals of spools of thread, one at each corner of the bridge. The spools represent the thread industry of the area.

The day you find yourself browsing through some dealer's stock of Connecticut obsolete notes and happen to find one from the Windham Bank you shouldn't be too surprised when you notice the vignette of two frogs because now you know the story of why they are there! One interesting aspect of collecting obsolete banknotes is that there are many images of local folklore just waiting to be re-discovered. Wouldn't it be nice if you were the one who brought these to light? *23*



Two of the four Windham Frogs that sit and look over the bridge in Willimantic. As you can tell, it is winter time and they are wearing appropriate garb as all smart frogs would!

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Head. The 1911 edition (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) should be used and is recommended for the intermediary who wants to learn a bit more about their coins rather than just cataloguing.

For Roman coins, we are fortunate that the coins have been systematically published in a 'type' book style and not by collection. The Roman Imperial Coinage (known as RIC, vol. 1-10, with several subdivisions and/or updates) provides a detailed catalog of every type and basic introduction and history. The series of *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (vol. 1-6) provides a less complete list of the Roman coin types known compared to RIC but has much more numismatic history from Augustus to Balbinus and Pupienus (27 BC to AD 238). For Roman Provincial coinage, the series is still underway, but several volumes have been published as *Roman Provincial Coinage* (RPC). Volumes 1, 2, 3, 7.1, and 9 are published and online. Several others are online as well.<sup>3</sup> The online version only has the catalog while the printed copies include introductions and text. For Roman Republican coins, the standard reference book remains Crawford's *Roman Republican Coinage* (RRC). The best reference books for Byzantine coinage is the collection at Dumbarton Oaks (Washington DC).

My advice to beginners is to go online and look through ancient coins and determine what coins particularly interest you – perhaps by style, or iconography, etc. and then acquire the relevant Sear and/or CNG books before acquiring the 'professional' books. You will inevitably need the latter but the price tag can be prohibitive at first. Most of the catalogs will set you back around \$150-250 each. Thus, for Roman Imperial coins you will need to invest over \$1,000 in books, however, these are truly inevitable if you want to dive into ancient coin collecting and have a solid knowledge base. Reprints can be acquired cheaper but generally do not hold value. First editions have tended to hold their value so you will generally recoup your library investment if you decide to part from your collection and books.

Auction catalogs are another important source for study, particular for Greek coins and older ones that are not readily available online. These are especially important if you want to try trace the pedigree/provenance of some of your coins.

Since these professional books only have limited historical information, you will also want to acquire additional books to fill in information about the coins themselves. Useful and affordable (around \$20) introduction books include:

*Coinage in the Roman World* – Burnett

*Coinage in the Greek World* – Carradice and Price

*Coinage in the Celtic World* – Nash

*Ancient History from Coins* - Howgego

Thereafter, you will find hundreds of detailed books ranging from very specific ancient coin subjects to generalized ancient numismatic history. Most major European numismatic journals are heavily orientated towards ancient coinages so each year hundreds of high quality peer-review articles are published constantly changing our knowledge base. It truly is a field that is so vast that you can spend a lifetime studying and never become bored!

### **Buying**

When you decide you are ready to start buying coins, it is always recommended that you do so from reputable dealers. Ebay may offer some fantastic deals but *emtor caveat* (buyer beware)! There are many fakes and other issues to be wary of (see below). Prices for ancient coins vary widely and range anywhere between \$5 to \$1,000,000 so it is essential to know what you're buying and from who. VCoins.com is a good site to purchase coins online since the dealers on the site are vetted and follow a code of ethics. Most of the dealers will be members of IAPN (International Association of Professional Numismatists) who have a clear code of ethics regarding fakes and imports.

An important part of ancient coinage is the legality of collecting and importing. Buying from reputable dealers or auction houses is essential since they will take care of (or will have taken care of) all the paperwork for you. Since the United States has bilateral agreements with individual countries, each type of coinage based on where it was struck and/or found has a different set of laws to follow (known as an MOU = Memorandum of Understanding). Also impacting the legality of collecting is the UNESCO 1970 *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*, an international treaty the United States signed. Its goal is to protect cultural heritage around the world and coins are considered as cultural property. All the details of these agreements can be found online. Needless to say, it is important to be careful with what you collect as you do not want to encourage illegal looting. Reputable dealers and auction houses are well-versed with the legalities and it is for this reason you should purchase from them and not some anonymous seller on Ebay. For the collector,

*Continued on next page*

### *Collecting Ancient Coins Continued*

the outcome of these regulations is that there is some limitation on what can be collected and or its availability in the market and coins that have a long and good pedigree/provenance command premium prices; especially those with pre-1970 provenance. However, due to the bilateral agreements you can still purchase coins without a pre-1970 provenance, provided they meet the criteria of the MOU, which are far less restrictive. These are obviously complicated issues with many points of view so I encourage you to take some time to look into them and talk to others to learn more.

In addition to VCoins.com you may wish to use Numisbids.com or sixbid.com, two websites that agglomerate auctions of ancient coins. Coinarchives.com, procoinarchives.com (subscription), and acsearch.info (free and subscription based), are websites that agglomerate auction results with prices realized. This will help you gauge the value of a particular purchase you are considering. It is important to remember that since nearly all ancient coins were hand struck, no two coins will ever be identical, so prices can differ for many reasons.

### **Grading and Condition**

In general, coin grades with ancient coins do not mean as much as they do for American/modern coins. The coin grades when indicated by dealers or auction houses are general grades (F, VF, XF, etc.) since the Sheldon 70-point grading scale is not useful. Again, this is due to the fact that ancient coins are hand struck and thus each coin is different. They have also lasted for over 2,000 years and so minor imperfections are to be expected. A hairline scratch will not impact the value of your coin. Corrosion, wear, patina (coloring), and strike are more crucial to determining the quality of your coin. Using agglomeration websites of past and current auctions will give you a sense of the average condition a particular type of ancient coin.

Slabbed coins are not 'a thing' for ancient coins, although this is changing in the United States. NGC has started to slab coins although most competent ancient coin collectors do not value this at all and will not consider premiums for 'grades'. Like modern coins, you should be purchasing the coin and not the coin holder. In fact, most ancient coin collectors I know will deliberately avoid slabbed ancient coins or break them free. One reason for this is the following, as stated on NGC's website:

NGC Ancients is committed to grading only genuine coins, but it does not guarantee authenticity, genuineness or attribution, nor is any guarantee of these aspects implied.



Thus, you could have a slabbed coin that is a fake. For a beginner these slabbed coins may help but edges are important to help determine authenticity and cannot easily be verified by the buyer if the coin is in a slab. Another concern is that if you purchase a slabbed coin and then it turns out to be a fake upon 'freeing' it, there is no recourse. You have lost your money. Auction houses also do not guarantee the authenticity of slabbed coins further limiting your protection as a buyer. Until NGC and/or auction houses stand by slabbed coins properly, I would not recommend purchasing them. You are far better off buying 'free' coins from a dealer that you can examine yourself, as you perfect your skills identifying fakes. Most dealers have a cabinet of fake coins and are readily happy to assist you identifying these. Dealers that are members of IAPN may not sell fakes and make all efforts to pull these out from the market.

On a final note regarding condition, do not attempt cleaning the coins yourselves. Many things that seem off to modern coin collectors are perfectly natural to ancient coin collectors. Spots on a bronze coin could be part of the patina and attempting to clean this will ruin the value of the coin. As a general rule, you should not purchase coins that need 'cleaning' and especially not 'dirty' coins that are bought in bulk. These coins almost always have contravened the importation laws and/or have been looted. Stick to coins that look like they have been properly taken care of or discuss your options with experts to see what they make of any 'imperfections' of your coins.

### **How and what to collect**

Since you may not be purchasing slabbed coins, you will need to store your coin purchases some other method. A common and recommend method for small collections is a coin case with little squares, lined with felt. This can be safely used for the medium-term (i.e. your lifetime) but not for museums, for example, who plan to keep coins in perpetuity. Plastic flips are also commonly used but not recommended for long periods of time.

Since ancient coinage is so diverse and has so many price points, what could/should you collect? The beauty of the field is that there is no one answer. Typical collection 'sets' include the 12 Caesars or particular reverse types (e.g. animals or architecture). Coins with mythology scenes are endless as well and could be a great way to learn more about myths and ancient deities. Since there are multiple denominations at play as well, you could do a 12 Caesars set in gold, silver, or bronze (multiple denominations). It truly is endless and you should buy what you find appealing and interesting. Once you acquire your coin, you could also

*Continued on next page*

spend some time doing research into its provenance/pedigree. Many coins in the market have longer pedigrees than recorded because it has not been something vendors have been focused on until recently. It is also a time consuming endeavour but it can be highly rewarding (intellectually and even financially!).

Rarity with ancient coins is not necessarily an important aspect. Despite being hand struck and thousands of years old, ancient coins survive in massive quantities to this day and a new hoard could dramatically change 'rarity'. For example, the Tomares hoard in Spain found a few years ago, consisting of early fourth century coins (Diocletian, etc.) is estimated to consist of more than 200,00 'mint state' bronze coins. The RekaDevnia hoard found a century ago in Bulgaria had over 100,000 silver denarii. Who knows when the next one will be found?

That being said, there are certainly some coins that are more rare than others but we do not have a good sense of coin populations so you should not pay too much attention to coins labelled as 'rare'. Many Roman Provincial coins are 'rare' because only a handful of examples are known to exist for a particular type but this becomes less meaningful when thousands of types are 'rare'. You should instead focus on other factors, such as quality and condition, and whether it is something that interests you. If this is a coin you have long wanted to purchase and studied, you will have a better sense of its 'rarity' and value than other people.

## Conclusion

Ancient coinage offers you endless possibilities for study and collecting. There is a reason most ancient numismatists only hit their stride after decades of experience and study. There are countless combinations for any theme you decide to collect but you will need to find a balance between quality and cost, while keeping in mind the pertinent factors of ancient coinage (condition and pedigree). You may also find it hard to limit yourself to one particular theme. With so many new publications each year you can be sure that you will not easily become bored with ancient numismatics especially with the hundreds of thousands of different coins out there. Happy hunting and learning! £

## Notes:

1 Jackson-Tomasko Associate Curator of Numismatics, Yale University Art Gallery.

2 The titles of the books are usually something along the lines: *Greek Coins and their values*, or *Roman Coins and their Values*, etc.

3 The titles of the books are usually something along the lines: *Handbook of Coins of Macedonia and its Neighbors*, or *Handbook of Coins of Northern and Central Greece*.

4 <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/>

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# Holy Cow! Is That a \$2 Bill?

By: Eric Ferreri



I didn't have any Phil Rizzuto baseball cards, and why should I have, really?

He wasn't a player I cared about. Not really. It was the late 1980s, and while I was heavy into baseball card collecting, I cared far more about current New York Yankees first baseman Don Mattingly than I did about Rizzuto, the quirky, eccentric color commentator who did Yankees games on WPIX, the local TV network.

But Rizzuto was to be signing autographs at a local sportscards show, and he was something of a family hero in my household, given his exploits in the 1940s and '50s as the shortstop for the powerhouse Yankees team that won seven world championships during his tenure.

My dad was a fan, and always got a chuckle when we'd watch the games together and the diminutive Rizzuto would uncork his trademark 'Holy Cow' exclamation when something significant happened in the game. He sprinkled in that catch phrase liberally over the course of each Yankees game, to the point that you'd expect to hear it and feel cheated if you didn't.

So I was headed to the local show and wanted to get Rizzuto's autograph. But on what? I had no card or poster and didn't want to buy one just to get it signed.

So I rifled through a drawer and found a two-dollar bill. Dad's a numismatist, and we always had a few two-dollar bills kicking around

the house, and there was always something about them that drew my eye. They always seemed clean and un-used for some reason - probably because dad kept them in a drawer and not in his wallet. Maybe it was the way ole Thomas Jefferson gazed wisely out from that central window of the bill, almost smirking at the artist. He looks pleased with himself; then again, I'd be pleased with myself if I'd written anything half as genius as the Declaration of Independence.

But mostly, I liked two-dollar bills because you just didn't see them often and when you produced one, you'd get a reaction from people. And I thought that was fun.

So I took the bill with me to the show, I got in the autograph line, paid the \$10 or whatever it cost to buy the great man's scrawl, and waited my turn.

You heard him before you saw him. He was a little guy made smaller by sitting, scrunched, at a table on a folding chair. But man, did you hear him. The patter was constant. Just as he was on the local Yankees telecast, Phil Rizzuto made everyone around him comfortable.

"Well hi, howareya," he'd say, and if you handed him an old card of his to sign, he'd add "Hey, I look good here!" (He really did say that. It stuck with me)

As I waited in that line I wondered what he might say, whether the moment would pass so quickly as to be totally unmemorable. But as my turn appeared and I took the bill from its holder and placed it in front of him, Phil Rizzuto delivered.

"Whoooooa, wouldyalookatthisonehere," he said, turning seven words into one. "Holy Cow!"

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for green mountain – Vermont is mostly forest now but back then it was green and hilly.

Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain boys captured Fort Ticonderoga from the British in 1775 (see map and picture on left) and suggested a military expedition to Canada, but Allen's cousin Seth Warner was chosen instead to lead the expedition. Ethan tried to capture Montreal before all his soldiers got there and was himself captured by the British and imprisoned (he was later exchanged in 1778).

During 1775 - 1777 conventions held in Vermont (largely lead by Ira Allen) culminated on Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 1777 with a declaration of Vermont independence from the jurisdictions and land claims of British Quebec, and American New Hampshire and New York. At the time Ira Allen's brother, Ethan, was languishing in a British jail. Ethan was, according to Slabaugh (see reference) was "fiery and colorful... a man of great physical strength". After Ethan was exchanged for another prisoner in 1778 he returned to Vermont politics and business and wrote on transcendentalism. He died from a stroke at the age of 51.

Later on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1777 the Green Mountain boys and New Hampshire militia defeated the British at the Battle of Bennington where the Continental army stores were kept. August 16<sup>th</sup> is still a state holiday in Vermont, called Bennington Battle day.

In 1777, the British plan was for British General Burgoyne to travel south with 8,000 men to meet up with General Howe coming from New York City up the Hudson River valley, forming a giant pincer movement to cut off New England from the rest the American colonies. But General Howe disobeyed orders, and occupied Philadelphia instead, and never met up with Burgoyne.

Burgoyne was running short on supplies and heard of the Continental supply depot at Bennington, so he sent Lt. Col. Baum with 800 men to raid Bennington for supplies. Burgoyne incorrectly thought only 400 men defended Bennington.

A rebel force of 2,000 New Hampshire militia under General Stark, and 350 Green Mountain boys under Col. Warner were expecting them. Rain delayed Baum, and Stark encircled him taking many prisoners and killing Baum. A further 550 Hessians under British Lt. Col Breymann arrived to reinforce Baum.

But Breymann and his Hessians were too late and they lost even more men. Reinforcements had also arrived to help Stark and Warner drive off Burgoyne's soldiers. This was a strategic success because it reduced Burgoyne's army by 1,000 men, deprived him of desperately needed sup-

plies and melted away Burgoyne's Indian support.

When Continental army General Horatio Gates met Burgoyne at Saratoga, he defeated the weakened Burgoyne. Saratoga was the first major rebel victory during the American Revolutionary War. France had been waiting for an opportunity to enter the war on America's side. And this was that opportunity.

Vermont asked to be the fourteenth state, but the Continental Congress refused because New York State had claims on their lands. Later, from 1785 to 1788 Vermont issued their own coins, on which the legend reads: STELLA QUARTA DECIMA (the fourteenth star i.e. 14<sup>th</sup> state on the flag). Vermont finally joined the Union as the 14<sup>th</sup> state in 1791 but had to pay New York \$30,000 to settle New York's claims to its land.

Ira Allen, a wealthy man, gifted \$4,000 to found the University of Vermont at Burlington, Vermont. A carpenter in 1790 made 75¢ for a day's work in New Hampshire, so working 6 days a week would have had to have worked 17 years to earn that amount of money. Ira Allen was the person who most of all was responsible for founding the state of Vermont.

A sorrowful postscript on Ira Allen: In 1795, he travelled to France to seek French army intervention to seize Canada in order to create an independent republic called United Columbia. He bought 20,000 muskets and 24 cannons but the British captured him and accused him of smuggling arms into Ireland. Allen was jailed in England. When he finally returned to Vermont in 1801 he was destitute and owed back taxes. To avoid debtor's prison, he escaped to Philadelphia where he eked out the remainder of his days in poverty, till death took him in 1814. ☹

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# NOTICE

Normally we would be listing the information on local club meetings and contact information but as the majority of these are cancelled at this time due to Covid-19, please contact the clubs via their website for the required information.

Coin Show News of which most are the listings for EBW Promotions have been cancelled with a few exceptions. Please go to [www.ebwpromotions.com](http://www.ebwpromotions.com) for the most up to date information.

## **Important message for authors:**

The ideal formats for Nena News to accept manuscripts are: "Word" document for text and "jpg" or "pdf" format for images. There are other formats we can often convert from but "pdf" format is not easily converted to something compatible for this publication. Manuscripts in PDF format should be sent only to show location where graphics are to be placed.

# Junk Box Reporter

Welcome to the, "Junk Box Reporter" a column reserved for brief reports of unusual finds by members in those unusual places like old desk drawers, in walls of renovated rooms, at flea markets, coin machine rejects slots., dealer's junk boxes, etc.

Submit your brief write up about and scan (if possible) of the object and the place or how it was found, an estimated value if possible and other highlights about the find including your name or just initials if you wish to remain anonymous to: John Ferreri P.O. Box 33 Storrs, CT 06268.

"JBR" briefs do not qualify for dues reduction as do submitted articles. Some "JBR" briefs may be edited to conform with the purpose of the column. Tell us about your experience! We want to hear from you!

Hello to all! David Howard from the "Cape" is reporting his finds from a "Junk Drawer".

The Connecticut Turnpike Authority issued these tokens from 1958 until 1988 when serious accidents and deaths at the toll booths caused State sentiments to insist the discontinuance of toll booths.. These were issued at a cost of 17 cents (when bought in bulk) and people soon found that they could also be used in the NY subway system, taking the place of a 40c token. Hmmmm?



Wooden Nickel from Bonanza Steak House. These were from a favorite eatery started by Dan Blocker of "Cartwright" fame in the T.V. series of "Bonanza" in Westport, Connecticut and grew to a chain of 600 shops all over the country from 1963-1989 when they then merged with Ponderosa Steak Houses. They are now extinct.



Token issued during the ANA Boston Convention in 2010 and imitating the Pine Tree Shilling made in Massachusetts. The item does not specify the issuer. It could be the ANA (doubt it) or one of the Massachusetts coin clubs (more likely) or the New England Numismatic Association (could be). Will the actual issuer please step up and let Mr. Howard know by emailing us here at Nena News using the email address: [johnnybanknote@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnybanknote@yahoo.com)?



*Continued on next page*

### *Junk Box Reporter Continued*

Before my retirement, coin clubs, and coin shows were nearly impossible for me to participate in. My working life had considerable requirements for my time involving nights, weekends, and even holidays.

I enjoyed coins and collecting but I had to rely on the various coin publications to fulfill my interest in the hobby. I still subscribe to many of the numismatic publications today.

In the 2019 October issue of *Coin World* in the back pages, I learned that Lincoln cent expert Virgil Marshall III passed away at the age of 84. More commonly known as "The Penny Merchant" he operated a brick-and-mortar shop in Wymore Nebraska. He contributed Lincoln cent prices to the Red and Blue Books. He taught Lincoln Cent classes at many ANA Summer Seminars. He won all three of the new member recruitment competitions held by the ANA. He served on the Nebraska State Quarter Design Committee. Virgil made a practice of putting collectible coins from his stock into circulation, decades before the Great American Coin Hunt sought to institutionalize the practice.

It was also in the back pages of *Coin World* in the classified pages that I first discovered Virg Marshall III "Penny Merchant" coins for sale ad. I placed my first order for coins from Virg Marshall in November of 1993. That first order consisted of a BU roll of 1942 Lincoln cents for \$23.50, a BU roll of 1942-D Lincoln Cents for \$13.50, an AU BU roll of Lincoln cents for \$3.50. I also got a Widows Mite and a MS60 1920 Lincoln cent for \$6.95, a 1960 Proof set for \$8.50 and a 1960 small date proof set for \$18.50.

After that, I was on his mailing list and he would send bi-monthly fliers offering the latest deals.

Virg would often put Christian based quips and quotes and other interesting things in the center of his fliers. I remember one that said, "Who is the largest coin dealer in the country?" Hint, "We all have to deal with him by April 15<sup>th</sup>."

On January 29, 1996 I bought a roll of 20 1996 US Silver Eagles for \$146.50.

Many of the mail-order dealers will offer things called a value box, grab bag, or treasure chest. These are a way of offering their buyers a small piece of the their "Junk-Box." The buyer can choose a value of \$25, \$50, or \$100.00. The order would be filled with anything numismatic, that will total the value of the requested order. You need to trust that the dealer will be fair with what he sends you and they usually are, and you'll get some interesting things.

Virg Marshall referred to them as surprise packages. On November 30, 1995 I placed a \$50 order for one such package from Virg. My order arrived in an envelope with sixteen items. The list of those items included, an (AG3) 1807-7 over 6 comet large cent. This turned out to be a Sheldon S-271 variety. The typical kind of thing one would find in a coin dealer's junk box. There also was a 1952 (Honduras) 20 centavos, 90% silver, a 1787 (Bust left) (AG3) Connecticut cent, a 1938-D Jefferson nickel (AU+), a 1943-S Jefferson nickel (MS63), a 1942-D Mercury dime (MS64) FSB, a 1967 SMS Roosevelt dime, a 1908-D Barber quarter (G), a 1929 Standing Liberty quarter (G), an 1897-O Barber half dollar (AG3 filler), a 1934-S Walking Liberty half dollar (F), a 1969-D Kennedy half dollar (MS63), a 1973 Bicentennial Medal, an 1891-O Morgan dollar (F), a 1923 Peace dollar (MS63) pink toning, and a 1971 IKE dollar (UNC.)

An even division of those items comes to \$3.13 for each piece. This was a reasonable deal in 1995. Perhaps six out of the sixteen items would not reach the \$3.13 value but the other ten more than made up for it.

No hidden rarities but trusting a dealer that you never met in person, to give a fair deal, turned out okay.

Opening a package with no knowledge of what numismatic items might be inside, is almost as much fun as plowing through a dealer's junk box and finding an odd but affordable piece to do some research on.

Bill Jacobik

### **Notice to Dues Delinquent Members**

For your convenience a dues return envelope was provided in the last mailing of Nena News. Some members may have not noticed it or have forgotten about it. In order to be current please check to see if you are paid up to at least 12-31-20. If not, you are in arrears. This information will appear on the address label on the back of your "News" issue. If you are not in current status this may be the final issue we can provide.

If there is a question regarding your membership please contact the membership director, Mr. Robert Fritsch at: P.O. Box 3003 Nashua, NH 03061 or [bobfritsch@earthlink.net](mailto:bobfritsch@earthlink.net).



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